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SALIX SERISSIMA AUTUMN WILLOW

Autumn Willow is a shrub growing 1-4 m tall, with bark ranging from grey on the older branches to straw colored on younger branches to shiny red-brown on the youngest twigs. Buds and leaves are arranged alternately on the stems. The leaf stalks usually have glands at the base of the leaf blades. The elliptic to lance-shaped leaf blades are 4-8 cm long and 1-2.5 cm wide and have long, tapered tips and fine glandular-tipped teeth on the margins; they are semiglossy yellow-green to dark green above and dull and paler colored below. Flowers are borne in catkins that appear after the leaves; male and female flowers occur on separate plants. The female catkins are 2-4 cm long and are borne on short, leafy branchlets. The bracts that subtend the female flowers are light yellow and hairy and fall off before the capsules mature. The capsules lack hairs and are 7-10 mm long and borne on stalks which are 0.5-2 mm long. Flowering in June, fruiting in July-September.

Distinguished from other species of *SALIX* by the finely-toothed, long taper-tipped, bicolored leaves with glandular petioles, and the glabrous capsules that mature much later than those of most other Montana willows. A hand lens is needed for positive identification.